

**Testimony of
Charles R. Dickerson**

1 **DELMARVA POWER & LIGHT COMPANY**
2 **TESTIMONY OF CHARLES R. DICKERSON**
3 **BEFORE THE DELAWARE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**
4 **CONCERNING AN INCREASE IN ELECTRIC BASE RATES**
5 **DOCKET NO. 11-__**
6

7 **1. Q: Please state your name and position, and business address.**

8 **A:** My name is Charles R. Dickerson and I am Vice President Customer Care,
9 Pepco Holdings, Inc. (PHI). I am testifying on behalf of Delmarva Power &
10 Light Company (Delmarva or the Company). My business address in 701 Ninth
11 Street, N.W., Washington, DC.

12 **2. Q: Please state your educational background and professional qualifications.**

13 **A:** I graduated from the University of Maryland in 1989, receiving a degree
14 of Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. In 1999, I attained the degree
15 of Master of Science in Applied Management, also from the University of
16 Maryland. I have been employed by Pepco (subsequently PHI) since 1989,
17 serving in positions of escalating responsibility within the energy generation,
18 customer care, human resources, gas delivery, risk and strategic planning
19 functions. I have also served on the editorial board of Call Center Magazine and
20 as an Adjunct Professor in the School of Business & Public Administration at the
21 University of the District of Columbia.

22 **3. Q: What is the purpose of your testimony?**

23 **A:** I will discuss Customer Care initiatives that Delmarva has undertaken to
24 enhance customer service. This testimony was prepared by me or under my direct

1 supervision and control. The source documents for my testimony are Company
2 records, public documents, and my personal knowledge and experience.

3 4. Q: Please describe these Customer Care initiatives.

4 A: My Direct Testimony discusses the improvement in customer service to
5 our Delaware customers as part of an overall PHI effort. This improvement
6 addresses the additional service needs of our customers related to the increasing
7 demands for accurate and timely information related to energy awareness, and
8 events such as weather and/or other emergency conditions that have been shown
9 to reduce service levels based on current resources. These Customer Care
10 initiatives are comprised of four major components: personnel (additional
11 resources to serve customers), infrastructure (hardware and software), storm or
12 emergency related resources, and customer education and research. Each
13 component is necessary and integrated into a process solution for improving the
14 quality, timeliness, and effectiveness of service to Delmarva customers in the
15 State of Delaware. I will describe each in detail below.

16 5. Q: Please describe the additional personnel that have been employed for these
17 customer care initiatives.

18 A: We have undertaken initiatives to improve our customer service and
19 customers' satisfaction. To accomplish this we have hired or are in the process of
20 hiring additional personnel to support these initiatives. These incremental
21 personnel consist of additional Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) and the
22 associated supervisory positions, contract customer care resources from a Crisis
23 Call Center, and Training and Quality Monitoring staff to facilitate continued

1 training and monitoring of CSR's and other resources speaking with customers to
2 help ensure a higher level of quality service for our customers.

3 **6. Q: Please specifically address the need for the increased level of Customer**
4 **Service Representatives and associated training staff.**

5 A: The Company is employing thirty-three additional CSRs, and the
6 associated supervisory staff to support the increasing resource requirements to
7 maintain necessary service levels in the face of increasing call volume and
8 increasing Average Handle Time (AHT). These requirements are driven by
9 customers' expectations for Delmarva to communicate with them in a timely
10 manner regarding electrically related emergency situations, issues of service,
11 reliability, and energy information related to the new AMI environment and the
12 new common bill. To support the increasing volume of information to be
13 processed for analysis and reporting for Customer Operations, the Company in
14 early 2012 will hire two additional analysts in the Resource Management group..

15 These incremental resources are necessary to support and improve day-to-
16 day service quality for Delmarva as measured against industry service metrics
17 such as Telephone Service Factor, Average Speed of Answer, AHT, and
18 Abandonment Rate. Nineteen of the CSRs have been hired on as of November
19 14th, 2011. To effectively and efficiently address the seasonal call volume
20 increase, the remainder and their related supervision will be hired on in May
21 2012, in advance of the summer and associated storm season, which historically
22 results in significant increases in call volumes. Customers expect Delmarva to
23 communicate in a timely manner and provide accurate information, especially

1 when reliability is impaired during storm and/or emergency related situations,
2 which historically are the times when call center resources are most in demand.
3 Our customer care priority is to provide our customers a level of service that will
4 exceed that which was experienced during the storms of 2010 and 2011. The rate
5 making adjustments associated with these increased resource levels are reflected
6 in the Direct Testimony of Company Witness VonSteuben.

7 **7. Q: Please specifically address the need for the Crisis Call Center.**

8 A: To support the needs of the Delmarva customer contact center in high
9 volume situations due to a crisis such as a major storm such as experienced in
10 Hurricane Irene or a severe winter storm or system emergency, Delmarva has
11 contracted for additional customer service support to be provisioned by a third
12 party – a Crisis Call Center. This service will be provided by Affiliated Computer
13 Services (ACS), Inc. Negotiations for this service have taken place and it will be
14 fully implemented by March 31, 2012. When called upon, it will be available and
15 staffed by experienced call center personnel available on four hours notice.
16 Delmarva recognizes its critical responsibility to serve its customers in the First
17 State and it is critical to take the necessary steps to prepare for severe
18 contingencies such as hurricanes, severe winter storms, or system emergencies
19 that can adversely impact our normal capability to deliver information and service
20 to our customers. The costs for these resources will be addressed in the Direct
21 Testimony of Company Witness VonSteuben.

22 **8. Q: Please describe the additional infrastructure investments.**

1 A: The infrastructure component of this initiative consists of hardware and
2 associated software to increase the current call taking capacity of the Delmarva
3 telephony infrastructure. It addresses the increased service demands resulting
4 from severe weather such as the storms that impacted our customers during the
5 past year. The effort to minimize "busy signals" received by our customers due to
6 call volume exceeding the existing trunk capacity generally, and specifically
7 during storms or emergency conditions is another important component of
8 improving service quality.

9 Congestion on the telephony infrastructure has been addressed with an
10 agreement to increase the number of trunk lines into the contact centers servicing
11 Delmarva from 259 to 757. The installation of these lines will be completed by
12 March 31st, 2012. This expanded infrastructure will enable more customers to
13 connect to Delmarva CSRs or to the Interactive Voice Response system in times
14 of exceptionally heavy phone line congestion. The rate making adjustments
15 associated with this service are reflected in the Direct Testimony of Company
16 Witness VonSteuben.

17 9. Q: Please describe the request for additional customer education and market
18 research and how these resources support the requested ratemaking
19 adjustments.

20 A: As I indicated earlier in my testimony, Delmarva continues to be
21 extremely focused on the issue of reliability and, to that purpose, has put in place
22 an ongoing effort of storm preparedness education for its customers. While the
23 associated ratemaking adjustments will be addressed in the Direct Testimony of

1 Company Witness VonSteuben, I will describe here the reasons for these requests.

2 This storm preparedness education consists of timely preparatory information
3 released through all media channels to our customers on a more frequent basis
4 than previously disseminated. It addresses how to prepare for storm seasons, how
5 to best communicate storm related concerns such as outage information, outage
6 readiness (i.e., storm readiness kits, shelter information), outage preparedness
7 (i.e., what items to have on hand for varying length outages, important contact
8 numbers), and how to best contact Delmarva when an outage occurs. It also
9 includes information such as the impact of tree trimming on outages, storm
10 related or otherwise, electrical safety (i.e., what to do if you witness a downed
11 wire, who to call, safety precautions to take at the home or work), as well as how
12 reliability affects the use of various systems in the home and business. These
13 reliability and related education programs are ongoing and take place throughout
14 the year.

15 Delmarva also recognizes that to be even more effective with our
16 customer interactions, we must increase the frequency and use of surveys for
17 feedback on our customer contact activities, customer opinion assessment, and
18 more sophisticated customer segmentation modeling tools. These are necessary
19 to identify how to be more effective in providing services to our customers that
20 are critical to future successes and improved customer satisfaction.

21 As we continue to be more involved with our customers through increased
22 and improved customer service, energy information, reliability education, and
23 support of Delaware's overall energy plan, we need to perform the necessary

1 market research to better understand our customers' varied perspectives on the
2 effectiveness of our efforts. Using the appropriate market research tools provides
3 us insights into how customers can be most effectively messaged across a variety
4 of channels and subject areas, and how to listen for and incorporate their input for
5 service and program improvement. This increased capability will help Delmarva
6 understand and pro-actively engage our customers in what they want from their
7 electric utility service company. The costs for these resources will be addressed
8 in the Direct Testimony of Company Witness VonSteuben.

9 **10. Q: Does this conclude your testimony?**

10 **A:** Yes, it does.